

## Istook Applauds House Stand for Heartland Values

*Washington, D.C.* -- Congressman Ernest J. Istook (R-OK) is praising the U.S. House of Representatives for working to strengthen America's values, as one necessary part of addressing violence at schools.

The House voted not only to stiffen the penalties for juveniles who commit crimes, but also acted to protect school prayer, permit displays of the Ten Commandments on public property, and to hold Hollywood accountable for marketing obscene violence to children.

**"No law can compensate for a weak home," Istook said, "But our laws need to back-up parents who teach strong values to their kids. Pushed by liberal activists and amoral greed, the entertainment industry, federal laws and court decisions have been undercutting our values; it's time we all reverse that course, and we're trying to help. America has been pushed too far; now America is pushing back. These votes are a victory for schools, for students, and for religious freedom. "**

The House passed an amendment to end the financial incentive for those who sue schools to stop religious expression by students. The amendment, which Istook helped write along with principal author Jim DeMint (R-SC) passed the House, 238-189.

**"Current law forces schools to pay legal fees for people who sue and block prayer at school, at graduation, or other activities. This amendment stops that bounty-hunting by lawyers for the ACLU and similar groups, who are robbing schools of taxpayer money which is supposed to go to the classroom. They can still sue if they want, but this helps end the taxpayer subsidy for the ACLU."**

Istook, however, voted against an amendment to require extensive warning labels about violence on video games, movies and music which failed by a vote 161 to 266. **"This plan would have created a huge new government bureaucracy to review and oversee all entertainment media in America--a huge government bureaucracy that then would decide what labels would be appropriate for each movie, TV show, video game, and so forth."** stated Istook.

Istook supported and the House passed a measure requiring a review of all information available on the entertainment industry's influence on children.

In a separate vote, Istook supported a measure expanding the obscenity law to outlaw selling to minors any media with obscene violence, as well as obscene sex. **"Violence in the media can be just as obscene and damaging to our children as gratuitous sex. No type of obscenity deserves constitutional protection,"** said Istook.

Istook has also been pushing for legislation requiring Internet filtering software on all library and school computers paid for with federal funds. The House included similar language in the bill.